

ZONING OVERHAUL



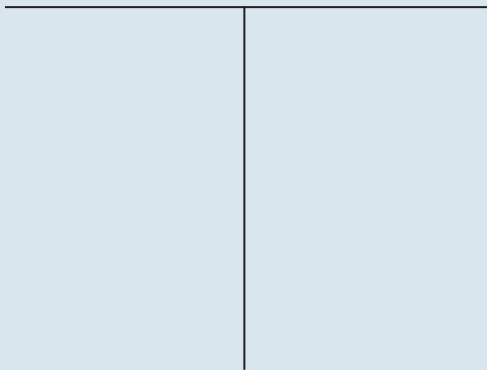
DORMERS & HOME ADDITIONS

**MINOR ALTERATIONS JUST GOT
EASIER**

Making minor alterations to add square footage
to your home by-right.



The type of urban development residents and city officials want to create clashes badly with existing zoning...And it's true for dormers, front porches, back decks, finished basements, and bay windows — the modest additions families have been adding to...homes for more than a century.



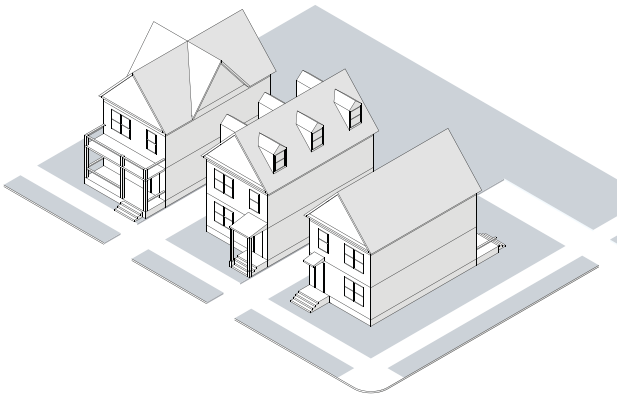
Paul McMorrow
Columnist, Boston Globe

ADDRESSING SMALL MODIFICATIONS

The new code makes smaller projects easier for homeowners and more predictable for neighbors. Most of Somerville's homes were built between 1870 and 1920 and have been modified over time with dormer windows, porches and decks, and side or rear additions. The new zoning ordinance establishes clear standards to ensure that these projects will fit with the surrounding neighborhood, and eliminates loopholes that can produce overdevelopment. At the same time, it allows these very common small alterations to be carried out by right without a long and involved special permit process.

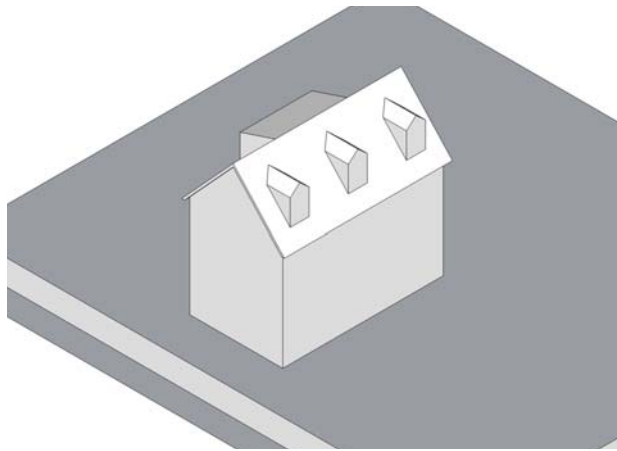
BUILDING COMPONENTS

The new zoning ordinance eliminates guesswork by defining appropriate sizes for typical modifications like dormers, decks, front porches and rear additions. These definitions and dimensions are based on measurements taken from existing Somerville homes. Clear rules describe how these elements can be placed on an existing building without compromising privacy or quality-of-life for neighbors.



GRAPHICAL STANDARDS

The new code includes hundreds of illustrations and diagrams. Each building component is illustrated, with its measurements clearly labeled. This will reduce uncertainty for homeowners, builders and neighbors, and ensure that modifications blend in to the historic fabric of the neighborhood.



ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The new code establishes clear standards for home modifications, and eliminates loopholes that can lead to inappropriate additions. For projects that meet the new standards, a zoning permit will be granted administratively, without the need for a long and unpredictable discretionary review process.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

Housing needs change over time, and residents should be able to modify their home as children grow, or as health and mobility needs change. Clear rules for certain types of home improvements will encourage more Somerville residents to age in place and contribute to our incredible sense of community.

AMENITY SPACE

Every Somerville resident needs access to outdoor space. The new ordinance requires new buildings to provide one amenity space per residential unit (yards, decks and balconies are common examples). For existing buildings, the new ordinance provides clear standards for building new amenity spaces, including roof decks.



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